THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Government has seen the U.S. Department of State's annual report on Patterns of Global Terrorism for 2000, which was released in April 2001.

(b) Government has noted that the report recognises, *inter alia,* that the trend of terrorism shifting from the Middle East to South Asia has continued; that the Taliban continues to provide safe haven for international terrorists; that the Pakistan's Military Government continued previous Pakistani Government support of the Kashmir insurgency; and, that the United States remains concerned about reports of continued Pakistani support for the Taliban military operations in Afghanistan. Government has also noted the list of designated "Foreign Terrorist Organisations", which includes groups such as Harkat ul Mujahideen, Al Qaida and the LTTE, and the list of "Other Terrorist Groups", which includes Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

(c) India and the United States have established a India-U.S. Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism to intensify their bilateral cooperation and work together to advance international cooperation, including in the United Nations, to combat international terrorism.

Gas pipeline from Iran to India

2037. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government would not consider laying a gas pipeline from Iran to India through Pakistan for National Security reason;

(b) whether it has now been reported that Government have made a U-Turn in its policy and are agreeing to route the gas pipeline through Pakistan; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for this change in policy and what arrangements would be made to ensure the security and efficiency of the system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) The proposal of supply of Iranian gas to India is a bilateral matter between India and Iran. An Indo-Iran Joint Committee was constituted in May 2000 to examine all aspects relating to supply of Iranian gas to India. The Joint Committee has met on four occasions since then to consider these including different modes of transportation, route options and related political, security, economic and technical issues.

During Prime Minister's visit to Iran from April 10—13, 2001, Prime Minister and President of Iran directed the Committee to commission joint feasibility studies through appropriate mechanisms for offshore and overland pipelines from Iran to India on an equal cost-sharing basis. They also directed that the studies be completed expeditiously. A feasibility study for the deep-sea option has been awarded.

Flexibility in Hardware Sector

2038. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the need to focus on hardware development in order to become a global I.T. Power which is possible only if we generate $ 6 billion hardware instead of $2.5 million as at present;

(b) whether Government are also aware of the need to sell 3.6 million of Personal Computers instead of 1.7 million and to have 11 million users of internet instead of 2.5 million users; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take so that we could achieve parity with China where IT achieved a success?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government is aware of the need to promote IT Hardware production and Internet access proliferation in the country.

(c) The steps taken by Government to promote IT Hardware Industry and Internet proliferation are given in statement I and II respectively.